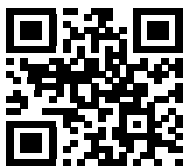
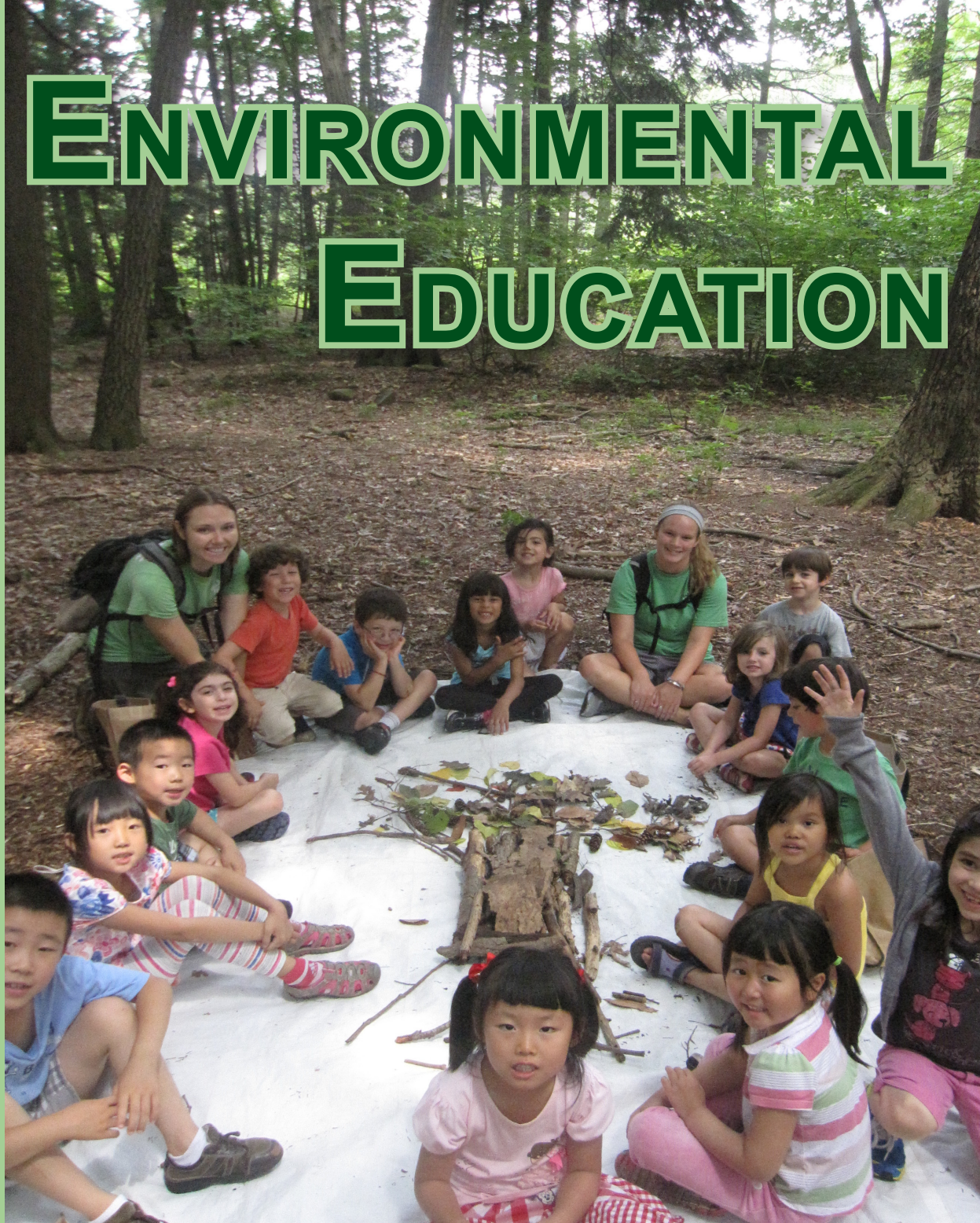


# Get Outside and Learn!

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

 **BROOKLINE**  
• RECREATION •



[www.brooklinerec.com](http://www.brooklinerec.com)

617.730.2076

654 Hammond St, Brookline MA 02467



# What is Environmental Education?

Environmental Education is primarily the process of creating awareness and understanding of the natural world in people and teaching them to think critically on its behalf. Environmental Education (EE) instructs both children and adults on how to investigate and appreciate their environment through observation, experiment, and conservation. Instead of promoting or stressing a certain viewpoint about the environment, EE aims to expose people to the true state of their natural world and empower them to form their own conclusions about how to improve it and make it sustainable. EE can exist in several forms, whether it is in a formal classroom setting, at a science museum, zoo or aquarium, or out in the field with a naturalist. EE in Brookline primarily functions through the variety of outdoor programs offered by our full time naturalist and environmental educator.

# Why is Environmental Education Important?

Extensive research has been conducted showing that kids who are active in nature are generally healthier than those who aren't. According to the National Environmental Education Foundation, exposure to nature can reduce stress levels by as much as 28% in children. Even a 20 minute walk in nature can help children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) concentrate better. Children have lost close to 50% of unstructured outdoor activity over recent decades and now spend an average of seven hours a day with various electronic media. Environmental Education provides an opportunity for children and adults to get outside, be active, and learn about their environment in a hands-on and applicable manner. If people have a personal connection with the natural spaces in their town they will be more likely to understand their importance and defend them in the future. Environmental education also promotes an awareness and sensitivity to the environment, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and a sense of responsibility for the natural world.



## Environmental Education Center

Unless otherwise noted, all camps and nature programs are based at the Brookline Environmental Education Center (BEEC) located within the Soule Park at 654 Hammond St in Chestnut Hill.

The BEEC features a comfortable, interactive learning space for up to 16 children, outdoor bird feeders, and a garden which participants take part in caring for.

## Private Program Offerings

Our environmental educator is available for private bookings for scout groups, birthday parties, school groups and more! Programs can be tailored to fit each group's need. Standard program offerings include:

**Nature Walks** Take a hike through one of Brookline's wonderful wildlife sanctuaries and learn all about the animals and plants that dwell there. Play fun and educational games to show you just what it's like for them to adapt to their habitats. Suggested age range: ALL

**Outdoor Skills** Learn basic survival and outdoor skills such as shelter building, fire building, map and compass skills and more. Suggested age range: 8 and up

**Geocaching** Geocaching is a worldwide orienteering game where caches are hidden in containers in urban and rural locations. Come brush up on your compass skills and discover these treasures that are hidden right in Brookline's parks! Suggested age range: 8 and up

**Fairy Houses** Hear the popular children's story "Fairy Houses" by Tracy Kane, take a walk through the woods, and construct your own fairy house out of natural materials! Suggested age range: 2-6

**Group Building** Bring your group closer together as you solve a series of challenging and fun group building initiatives. Work on communication, critical-thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. Suggested age range: 8 and up

Please note that program availability is based on the environmental educator's schedule.

**Program Rates**  
\$100/hr for a standard group  
\$50/hr for a non-profit group

## Environmental Education Programs

The Environmental Education Division offers year-round programs for all ages and strives to meet the outdoor adventure and educational needs of the diverse community of Brookline. Please check [www.brooklinerec.com](http://www.brooklinerec.com) for up-to-date activity offerings.



## Camp Programs

The largest and arguably most popular EE programs are the Summer Nature Camps. Nature camps provide children ages 5-13 with a full day nature experience. Our small groups allow campers to take daily field trips to the parks and sanctuaries of Brookline as well as to other nearby quality farms and natural areas in Massachusetts. Campers learn about the world around them through activities, games, themed lessons, and personal experience all in an attitude of fun and recreation. Currently camps are offered during public school vacations including December, February, April, and Summer.

## Family Programs

Family programs offer a chance for parents and their children to get outside and explore nature together. Current family offerings include a family campout, maple sugaring, amphibian night, marine day, and the family fishing festival.

## Youth Programs

Expose your children to the beauty and wonder of nature at a young age! Current youth offerings include nature explorations, early release outings, and a fairy houses program.

## Adventure Programs

Get outside and get active!! Current adventure offerings include canoeing, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, hiking, and kayaking.

## Brookline Youth Outdoors Club

A special outdoor adventure club for teens ages 14-17. The club is free to join and prices will vary by activities which may include kayaking, camping, hiking, and more! Contact Stephanie for more information and to join our mailing list.





## About the Environmental Educator

Stephanie Springer is our full time environmental educator and has been working in the field for over five years. Originally from Northern California, she received her Bachelors of Science degree in Biological Sciences from The University of the Pacific in Stockton, CA. During her undergraduate years Stephanie discovered a love for education but wanted the freedom of teaching outside of a formal classroom setting. Her first job as an education intern at a small aquarium brought her all the way across the country to Savannah, GA. This position was a great introduction to informal science education and confirmed her love for teaching and the outdoors. Stephanie went on to work for two other environmental education centers in Georgia and Rhode Island before coming to work for the Brookline Recreation Department in 2010. Over the course of her career, Stephanie has instructed over 15,000 people of all ages and backgrounds about everything from ecological concepts to marine science, geology, astronomy, outdoor skills and more.

Stephanie is thrilled to be working with the Town of Brookline in a position that lets her design and implement outdoor adventure and education programs that fit the community's needs. She aims to expose children and their parents to the wonders of nature, starting right in their own town at Brookline's beautiful parks and wildlife sanctuaries. In addition to her knowledge base in the field of environmental and life sciences and interest in outdoor adventure sports, she is also certified as a Wilderness First Responder through Wilderness Medical Associates which gives her the permission and confidence to handle medical situations in any setting. Stephanie is excited to remain an integral part of the community of Brookline and instill her passion for the outdoors into its wonderful citizens for years to come.



## Contact Information

**Phone** 617.730.2076

**Email** [sspringer@brooklinema.gov](mailto:sspringer@brooklinema.gov)

## Parent Testimonials

"I wish every Brookline child would have the advantage of taking part in Stephanie's environmental education programs. Indeed, every child, everywhere, would greatly benefit from programs like this. Stephanie and her staff enable children to discover an essential, fundamental part of this world – and really, of themselves. So many children miss out on this, miss out on what's true about the beauty and magnificence of this world."

"I signed my daughter up for Brookline's environmental education summer camp. My daughter fell in love with trees that summer - a passion that continues today - and remains incredibly aware of the natural world around her. I believe that is in large part because of the program that incorporated hands on learning to promote environmental awareness. It was tons of fun for her!"

"What can I say about Nature Camp? It's the best camp around. It is intimate and well run."

"My son thoroughly enjoyed and genuinely looked forward to each session of Nature Explorations. This wonderful opportunity was both a valuable learning experience and loads of fun. Kudos to teacher Stephanie! My son is already asking when the next session will begin."

## Kids' Quotes

"Nature camp was a life-changing experience for me. The field trips were awesome!"

"The best carrot I ever had was at nature camp when I picked my own!"

"I love nature classes because I learn about animals and I love animals!"

"The counselors are super nice and the activities are extraordinary."

"I like the farm. My favorite trip was blueberry picking. I also like looking for creatures in the pond."

"I had a great time at camp! The field trips, especially the one to Purgatory Chasm, were really fun!"

"Brookline Rec is a place where you can explore nature with fun counselors."